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## **Brokerage, Intermediation, Translation**

*Jana Hönke & Markus-Michael Müller*

Brokerage, a term prominent in the 1960s and 1970s, has returned. A huge literature analyses how brokers and intermediators—such as government officials, heads of non-governmental organization (NGOs), translators, neotraditional authorities—strategically negotiate flows of resources and political support between the local, national, and/or international level. The phenomenon seems especially prominent in areas of limited statehood (ALS). Governments may be unwilling or unable to exercise authority throughout their territory. Thus, other mediators step in.

Several contentious debates have ensued around this. One debate concerns the scope and historical origins of brokerage, often portraying brokers as a thing of the past and a pathology of the non-Western World. Such perspectives, however, do not consider the crucial role and long-term effects of colonialism, and, closely related, distinct trajectories of state formation, for understanding brokerage as key mode of governance in ALS—past and present. Indirect governance via brokerage and intermediation has, in addition, become a widespread phenomenon in many parts of the world including Europe and North America. The liberal (global) governance agenda of the last decades, by promoting community governance, empowered “new” brokers, such as NGOs, experts and corporate actors (Duffield 2001). Another point of contention concerns the limitations of an individualist, rationalist perspective, in which most of the literature on brokerage is rooted (Lewis and Mosse 2005).

In order to offer a comprehensive understanding of brokerage that avoids historical pathologization and goes beyond overly rationalist perspectives, this chapter pursues a broader, integrative agenda. We bring literatures on brokerage, intermediation and translation together, thereby offering a synthesis that by combining the strengths of these approaches on the topic, will help to understand and explain the role of brokerage as a mode of governance.

We review existing approaches to brokerage, intermediation and translation—including the identification of key findings, areas of innovation and gaps for future research—which to date remain dispersed across issue areas and disciplinary debates, to offer a conceptualization of brokerage in governance that connects them. This opens new opportunities for debate across research fields to understand and explain how brokers are embedded in, and brokerage is a part of, institutionalized modes of social coordination aimed at producing collectively binding rules and collective goods.

We proceed as follows. In a first step, we discuss key approaches to the topic. We then suggest a conceptualization of brokers and brokerage for the analysis of governance in ALS. In a third step, we discuss and map brokers and forms of brokerage along two categories that are particularly relevant for understanding brokerage as a mode of governance in ALS: brokerage of state governance and

brokerage in and of transnational governance. A final section discusses brokerage and the quality of governance outcomes, before we conclude and sketch lines for future research.

### **Main approaches to brokerage**

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines brokers as “one who acts as an intermediary.” A common-sensual understanding of brokerage, thus, suggests that the activity of brokers, brokerage, is synonymous with (inter)mediation, understood as “the act of coming between.” Brokers and brokerage are thus universal actors and activities as human interaction creates seemingly endless opportunities for (inter)mediation, such as, the mediation of conflicting interest, the establishment of private, political or economic contacts between actors often previously unknown to each other, or the translation of various expert knowledge to inform practices of governance.

Brokers and brokerage have been analyzed in several different ways. Political scientists tend to follow an actor-centred, mostly rationalist, approach by assuming that each actor involved explicitly weighs the costs and benefits of entering relations of brokerage, which are ultimately seen as interested and rational “transactions” (e.g. Warner 2008: 143). From this perspective, scholars have analyzed brokers particularly within the fields of party politics and elections (e.g. Larreguy et al. 2016; Stokes et al. 2013) as well as in often-related debates on clientelism, machine politics and patronage (e.g. Arias 2006; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Hilgers 2012; Müller 2013; Sidel 1999; Scott 1972; Szwarcberg 2012). While this literature often mentions brokers, the term, however, remains rather undefined. Studies tend to treat brokers, patrons and intermediaries as interchangeable terms (e.g. Szwarcberg 2012; Scott 1972: 95; Stokes 1995: 57). Additionally, due to its focus on specific issue areas, this literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of the different roles brokers can play beyond specific policy fields (Zarazaga 2014). Finally, the analytical focus tends to neglect transnational actors and processes.

Anthropological studies have devoted much work to grasp brokers and brokerage in conceptual and empirical terms. Classic contributions such as by Eric Wolf (1956: 97), conceptualize brokers as actors who “stand guard over the critical junctures and synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole,” with the latter referring to the national level of politics. The interactionist Manchester School of the 1960s and 1970s, while also focusing on particular individuals, was nonetheless able to capture much more of the complexity and ambiguity of situations and contexts of brokerage that tie individuals together. In this context, studies of African chiefs engaging with national-level politics emerged, but also studies of traditional healers and how they translated western medicine. Inspired by semiotics and stressing the symbolic dimension of brokerage, Clifford Geertz thus introduced the concept of “cultural broker” (1960). The kijaji, a Javanese Muslime leader he

describes, is a prominent example of this widespread phenomenon. His local legitimacy, Geertz argued, was based on his experience and relations with the broader Islamic World and Mecca, yet with the rise of the Indonesian state, the *kijaji* became part of new sets of translocal relations that turned him from a curer and mystic teacher into an (amateur) politician (Geertz 1960: 247). This work brought out more clearly the complexities of the process of nation-building in “the new countries of Asia and Africa” (ibid: 249). Early anthropological work on brokers, thus, in the spirit of modernization theory, was concerned with nation-building in the context of decolonialization, where the broker was considered “as a necessary but temporary actor that would disappear with the rise of new rational organizational forms” (Lindquist 2015: 871).

Following the decline of modernization theory from the late 1970s onwards, brokerage disappeared as a key focus of anthropology. More recently, however, the broker re-appeared in studies of development, revolving around both, an actor-oriented, interactionalist, and a relational approach. The *actor-oriented approach* has been inspired by the emergence of a growing number of intermediaries in development (Long and Long 1992; Olivier de Sardan 2005; James 2011). It set out to understand the crucial role of local partners, fixers and translators that an increasing number of international NGOs, bilateral donors and foundations work with to implement aid projects. The strength of this approach is its attention to transnational processes that shape the political economy of development and the strategic position it affords to intermediaries. However, some of this literature has been criticized for assuming relatively stable actor constellations and a fixed set of development policy and practice over which actors negotiate, and mediate between. Deborah James (2011) is an exception in that she argues that brokers are key in constituting the very “communities in need” that (in her case South African housing) policy aims at, thus creating the conditions for their own necessity. The actor-oriented approach shows “brokers operating at the ‘interfaces’ of different world-views and knowledge systems” (Lewis and Mosse 2006: 10) as they negotiate roles, relationships, and representations. The main limitation of this perspective is the key metaphor of “interfaces.” This wrongly suggesting clear-cut systems instead of the much more messy and complex strategies, exchange and translation processes that constitute transnational governance (ibid.). Focusing on individual actors and strategies risks to overlook broader power relations, as well as more-than-human actants of mediation and translation in governance in ALS.

Instead of delimiting analysis to how actors strategize *within* seemingly given arrangements and categories, others have called for the analysis of how governance projects “become real through the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters and so sustaining interpretations” (Lewis and Mosse 2006: 13). The uniformity of transnational governance models—from democracy promotion, to statebuilding, to economic development—is surprising given their

global travels. How do we make sense of such coherence across divergent contexts, heterogeneous practices and contestation? Development cooperation is characterized by metric and epistemic distance, which makes brokers and translation an inevitable part of communication between policy-emanating centre and sites of policy implementation (Rottenburg 2009; Mitchell 2002). An “epistemic link” thus has to be established that defines common objectives and practices that donors and recipients refer to. International development cooperation has manifold examples of this, such as the introduction of wealth-distribution models for extractive industries. In oil-producing Chad, such a model was spearheaded by the World Bank and involved international and local NGOs. Hoinathy and Behrends (2014) demonstrate that while the technical components of the model (new legislation, building the rule of law) traveled from Washington to N’Djamena, its significations and political rationalities did not. Instead of simply declaring the failure of the project, Hoinathy and Behrends show how the model got translated and put to use in new, unplanned, ways (see also Wszkalnys 2011). Thus, instead of viewing brokers as strategic, utility-maximizing actors that “bridge” between fixed social groups (Lindquist 2015: 6), a relational approach stresses the very creation and mediation of meaning and belonging through brokerage.

This line of research brings into view a crucial and largely overlooked issue with governance in ALS: the “complex and friction-laden relationship between thought and action in global governance” (Best 2014: 32). The starting point, here, is no longer the issue of policy diffusion and questions of success or failure, but rather how norms, policies and practices are co-created and constantly transformed while they travel. This contribution notwithstanding, the approach has also been criticized. For one it was for a certain “blindness for structural questions of power and authority” since their focus is on detailed modes of action rather than systemic imbalances (Dölemeyer and Rodatz 2010: 216). Additionally, while broadening our understanding of brokerage as a transnational process, there is still a tendency to focus on the “receiving end” of transnational governance. The role of brokerage in shaping the very global policies directed at ALS, and the international organizations (IOs) and institutions that produce them, merits more attention. We will turn to this below.

### **Brokers and Brokerage in Areas of Limited Statehood: A Conceptualization**

This section outlines our conceptualization of brokers and brokerage that we use for the analysis of brokerage as a mode of governance in ALS, and process that shapes such governance. By so doing, we draw on Risse’s chapter on modes of governance (this volume). Yet, by its nature, brokerage also questions analytical distinctions introduced there, as brokerage does not constitute an either hierarchical or non-hierarchical mode of governance.

As stated above, mediating practices and actors that bring people together are central aspects,

even foundational, for most social relations. Stovel et al. (2011) offer a useful starting definition of brokers as actors who provide for “intermediary links in systems of social, economic, or political relations who facilitate trade or transmission of valued resources that would otherwise be substantially more difficult. The crucial characteristics of brokers are that they (i) bridge gaps in social structure and (ii) help goods, information, opportunities, or knowledge to flow across those gaps” (ibid.: 21326). These bridging activities, obviously, can also be observed in the area of governance as an institutionalized mode of social coordination. Brokers, thus, are actors whose bridging and mediating activities influence the enforcement of collectively binding decisions, how collective goods are delivered, and for whom. From this follows that the power of brokers depends (a), upon their capacity to identify and access resources—from goods, to contacts, knowledge and/or information—that are desired by one actor or set of actors and that another actors can provide: “The broker gains power from the fact that without her cooperation neither group will get what it wants or needs”—a fact that converts brokers into gatekeepers often capable to demand bribes or political support in return for their bridging activities (Stovel and Shaw 2011: 149).

Brokers are situated at particular “interfaces” (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 10). Following from an understanding of brokers as actors with a rational interest in maintaining or enhancing their power follows that the universe of different functions brokers can perform, is limited. It comprises five different types of brokers and related forms of brokerage (Gould and Fernandez 1989: 91-94). The first type of broker is the *gatekeeper* who selectively grants access to her resources and contacts to an outsider. In addition to the gatekeeper, brokers can be *representatives* in the sense that they are delegates of a subgroup with the group’s “mandate” to negotiate contacts with outsiders in the group’s interest. A third type of broker is the in-group mediator, or *coordinator*. This broker mediates only within the group to which she belongs without establishing outside contacts. *Liaison brokers* and *itinerant brokers* are the remaining types of brokers. While the former type is an actor who connects other actors without having any prior linkages to the parties who she puts in contact with each other, the latter is a type of broker who, while the parties connected through her act of brokerage belong to the same group, the broker is an outsider. This approach has been criticized for neglecting the importance of bias and cohesion for understanding brokerage and the related question of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the goods and resources that are provided by the broker (Stovel et al. 2011), a point we will return to below.

If we move on from brokers to brokerage, three analytically different, yet empirically often interconnected, practices can be distinguished. We argue with Wenger (1998) that brokerage “involves processes of *translation*, *coordination*, and *alignment* between perspectives. [...] It also requires the ability to link practices by facilitating transactions between them” (ibid.: 109, emphasis added).

Translation occurs in hierarchical and non-hierarchical modes of governance. It can be understood as the “mutual enrollment and interlocking of interests that produces [...] realities” (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 11). In other words, translation not simply refers to brokers’ transmission of resources, such as goods or knowledge between “bridged” actors. The bridging itself produces realities. Brokers are both, filters and *relais*, through which things flow between the parties connected. The broker herself, thereby produces relations and realities that are irreducible to the interests of the bridged parts. Development policies for example “have to be translated into the different logic of the intentions, goals, and ambitions of the many people and institutions they bring together” (Mosse 2005: 232). That what flows between actors is itself modified through the act of translation, including the activity of the broker, but also the work of technologies of governance such as specific computer programs, report guidelines, or scripts of how to organize interactions. For instance, governance by external actors relies on the translation of blueprints, technologies, competent standard practices, that in the transfer process are (re)interpreted, carried and picked up by diverse mediators (Behrends et al. 2014: 2-4; Stepputat and Larsen 2015) while also carrying their own logic of ordering the world. Translation involves (a) defining a model; (b) testing, stabilizing, and specifying the roles of this model; and (c) rendering it mobile (Callon 1986). Once a governance model travels, it does retain something of its original definition but also changes. Translation thus is about how practices of knowing and ordering the world (and thus of governance) are inseparably intertwined and mediated by human brokers but also objects and technologies (Jasanoff 2004).

Brokerage also involves *coordination*. Coordination can be achieved through hierarchical mechanisms, such as a broker’s use/threat of coercion or compliance related to the broker’s legitimate authority and institutional embeddedness. But coordination can also be achieved through non-hierarchical mechanisms, such as negotiation or the mobilization of trust-based relationships (see Draude and Hölck this volume). This is not a disinterested practice. Brokers tend to coordinate the flow of *relevant* goods. As Zarazaga (2014) has illustrated with regards to the role of brokers in the Argentinian Social Income Working Program (*Argentina Trabaja: Programa de Ingreso Social con Trabajo*), which includes cooperatives that organize community work, such as street cleaning, brokers run these cooperatives and, as coordinators, they “usually decide which work has priority and how it is going to be completed” (ibid.: 29). Through this coordination work, brokers enhance their own power in three important ways:

First, they build a reputation for having access to resources and delivering them. They fill the gap between state provisions and people’s needs by getting services and small-scale public goods for their neighborhoods. By providing everything from pavement materials to sewage pipes, brokers develop a reputation for accessing resources and

delivering to poor people. (ibid).

From this follows that coordination is a strategic effort by brokers that aims at coordinating activities and actors in a way that the ability of the broker to perform as a coordinator enhances her power and standing vis-à-vis all parties involved.

*Alignment*, the third practice that brokerage entails, comes analytically close to what is often referred to mediation, namely the bridging of, often conflicting, interests through which the actors connected in and through brokerage are brought “in line.” Alignment, in this regard, “requires the ability to coordinate perspectives and actions in order to direct energies to a common purpose” (Wenger 1998: 187). It can therefore be seen as an analytically separate, yet empirically integrated, aspect of the coordination. And, as the latter, it can be achieved through hierarchical or non-hierarchical mechanisms. Hierarchical mechanisms can be based on alignment with a dominant party or social group. In addition to providing institutionalized meaning systems regarding the “common purpose,” alignments also offer access to political power and other material or political benefits. An example of this are Zambian ethnic leaders “who maintain consistent ties to a single political party and extract goods to further social interests” (Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015: 1203). Non-hierarchical mechanisms would involve the mobilization of trust-based relationships such as when representative brokers, for instance those involved in a social movement, in and through their actions produce feelings of trust that facilitate the alignment of personal and collective identities and interests: the “common purpose” mentioned above (Hunt and Benford: 2004: 445).

### **The Brokerage of State Governance**

One key concern that in the 1950s and 1960s led to the “discovery” of brokers, were processes of nation-building and state formation in “new states” undergoing decolonization (see above). These processes produced “gaps,” including those “between the cosmopolitan or national and the local, between the modern and the traditional, between the rulers and ruled” (Shils 1962: 30). It was this awareness of “gaps” that brought attention to brokers as actors capable of “bridging” the former through “the linking of the ‘little community’ with the larger socio-economic system in which it exists” (Powell 1970: 413).

Leaving the modernization theory overtones of these debates aside, what decolonization demonstrated was that in most “new states,” the “reach of the state” (Shue 1990) was structurally limited. Most of these states were and continue to be ALS. While this is not an exclusive feature of “new” postcolonial states, but also holds true for Southern Europe, notably in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece (e.g. Blakeley 2001; Gellner and Silva 1994; Hopkin and Mastropaolo 2001) as well as parts of the US (O'Donnell 1993: 1359; see also Scott 1972: 117; Cornwell 1964; Shefter 1994), it is



important to recognize that in the case of the “new” and not so “new” states—such as those of Latin America, which gained their independence more than a century before the wave of decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century—one central aspect that contributed to the structural emergence of brokers was the lasting impact of colonialism and related patterns of state formation. The latter were marked by internal center-periphery dynamics in which political power, as colonial state power, radiated “outward from the core political areas” and diminished in the peripheries (Herbst 2000: 252). As a consequence of this, postcolonial rule was selective as colonial power—including binding decision making—could not be exercised evenly and continuously. From this followed the “outsourcing” of political authority, to private companies and to local “big men,” such as *caciques* in Latin America, *zamidar* landlords in India or “traditional” chiefs in Africa, who became brokers, capable of bridging gaps between the colonial bureaucracies and local populations, and on who colonial administrations depended to get access to local populations, territories and resources (Hönke and Müller 2012: 389). In turn, this contributed to the “rule of intermediaries” (Schlichte 2005) throughout (post)colonial societies, including the negotiated character of political power (Hagmann and Péclard 2010, Müller 2012; Stepputat 2007), the presence of multiple forms of “private indirect government” (Mbembe 2001: 67–101), as well as the related dispersion of violence and fragmentation of sovereignty (Davis 2010; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). These processes created a political opportunity structure for the emergence of brokers who, through their linguistic capabilities and local embeddedness, were also frequently able to influence and transform the information, knowledge and actions of colonial powers, as well as to appropriate the symbols of the latter for their own purposes, thereby mediating colonial power and brokering—in the sense of translation, coordination and alignment—between local elites, populations and colonial officials (Osborn 2003).

Under such conditions, the reach of state governance “from the center” in ALS depends upon the incorporation of brokers in the “peripheries.” Brokerage, in turn, becomes a mode of governance that, from the perspective of state elites, enhances the reach of the state and state governance by incorporating brokers as “bridgers” and “translators,” with all the trade-offs this implies. State actors interested in expanding the reach of state governance depend on the bridging capacities of brokers who channel resources to themselves and their constituencies. However, state actors are not just passively dependent on brokers’ willingness and ability to “bridge.” They pursue different strategies that shape brokered forms of state governance.

One strategy can be termed “politics of appropriation” (Müller 2012). It consists of the tolerated appropriation of state resources by brokers for private (coercive, political and economic) purposes. By appropriating the state under informally negotiated rules of the game, brokers guarantee a mediated form of state governance that is appealing to state elites whose ability to enforce binding decision

throughout their territory is constrained (Müller 2012: 30). Stated otherwise, this mode of brokered state governance is based on efforts to incorporate brokers as “proxies” into political and economic projects pursued by state elites and bureaucrats in order to enhance the reach of the state in the absence of functioning state institutions.

Another strategy consists of the selective engagement with certain brokers as well as their privileged incorporation through “power-sharing arrangements” (Boone 2003). Through these efforts state elites not only foster competition between brokers. They also make institutional choices that aim at binding “loyal” brokers to particular state resources, thereby enhancing the brokers dependency on access to particular institutions while simultaneously weakening the brokers negotiation power vis-à-vis the state. If successful, brokers lose some of their autonomy and become clients of the state (ibid.). A third strategy that state actors resort to in order to undermine the power of brokers is the intentional bypassing of resources/the channeling of resources to competing brokers, including the intentional de-institutionalization of state structures that are tied to particular brokers (Reno 1998).

From the broker’s point of view, the response to such state efforts, in particular those aimed at undermining the broker’s power—be it through the cutting off from resources or the fostering of intra-broker competition—are met with resistance. As brokers depend upon their exclusive gate-keeping function, they often resort to violence or intimidation to maintain their status as the only gate in town, as for instance Friedrich’s classic account of Mexican town “bosses” or *caciques*, demonstrates (Friedrich 1986). However, brokers are not only confronted with top-down pressures but also by bottom-up demands. In contexts in which “monopolistic” brokers are literally the only actors capable of bridging “local” and “state” actors, they enjoy relatively high levels of autonomy and power. It is in such contexts where the politics of appropriation as a mode of brokered state governance dominate, with the implications that the incentives of the broker to distribute resources derived through brokerage beyond the “inner circle” of followers (on “inner-” and “outer-circle,” see Auyero 1999) are limited. However, in other constellations, where brokers are faced with a different and more plural/competitive environment, they have to demonstrate to their constituencies that the latter gain more from the alignment with a particular broker. This can improve the inclusiveness of collective goods: where ALS witness a democratization and pluralization of political actors, those at the receiving end of broker-state relations can and do switch alignments in order to get “most” out of their participation in brokerage. And it is this possibility of switching between different brokers that enhances the power of brokers’ constituency: pressure mounts to perform as an effective problem-solver and goods-provider for her group (Hilgers 2009; see also below).

One consequence of the dependence of brokerage on access to state resources, as well as the mediated distribution of derived goods, is that brokerage contributes positively to the symbolic

dimension of state governance in ALS. By extending the reach of the otherwise absent state, brokers produce “state effects” (Mitchell 1991) by producing state-related expectations, hopes and ideas—often via the broker’s translation of state ideas into local meaning systems (Nuijten 2003) — that reproduce a mediated shadow of state legitimacy even in the absence of functioning state institutions (Müller 2012). This, in turn, provides “possibilities for political action and activism” (Gupta 1995: 394) that are centred on the state and state-related entitlements, such as practices of citizenship (Hilgers 2009). The latter cannot be reduced to interested transactions but demonstrates that translation processes have the potential to escape the control of actors interested in maximizing their power. In other words, far from simply undermining the state, brokered state governance, in fact, positively contributes to the symbolic reproduction of the state in ALS.

### **Brokerage and Intermediation in Transnational Governance**

Brokerage, mediation and translation are ubiquitous in transnational governance, too. Research on this remains dispersed and little systematic though. The following pulls insights from several literatures together to identify key insights as well as future research frontiers in this emerging field of research.

Recall that from the 1980s onwards, governance through brokerage has become the norm rather than an exception in global governance (Avant et al. 2010; Neumann and Sending 2010; Schlichte 2005; Rosenau and Czempiel 1992). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the historical precedents of this, histories of empire and colonialism are full of evidence of brokerage (e.g. Schaffer 2009; Newbury 2000), as are accounts of Cold War patron-client structures between superpowers and former colonizing states on the one hand, and governments in the Global South on the other (Clapham 1996; Gasiorowski 1991).

In what follows, we will focus on the growing role of brokerage and intermediation in response to the “neoclassical revolution” in development from the 1980s, and in particular the era of post-Cold-War liberal global governance. External governance of ALS has come to follow a new logic that includes “non-state actors in shaping and carrying out global governance functions [...] by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted on into an entity that is both an object and a subject of government” (Neumann and Sending 2010: 16-17).

Similar to brokerage of state governance, brokers in international aid, transnational security or health governance seek to monopolize access to external donors, and channel resource flows in specific ways in return for rents and/or political legitimation (Olivier de Sardan 2005; Lewis and Mosse 2006). Competing brokers, such as different national political and/or bureaucratic elites, use their access to external actors in this regard. In some cases they even “invite” them to intervene (Müller 2015) in order “to discipline some strongmen in a domestic hierarchy of authority and exclude some groups

altogether” (Reno 1997: 196). Along similar lines, the post-9/11 global counterterrorism agenda has been used by domestic elites to enhance the capacity of security institutions and crack down on domestic opponents and minorities (Bachmann and Hönke 2010).

External actors, in turn, rely on intermediaries for various reasons. International relations are still based on the norm of sovereignty, even though it has become more porous. This norm requires to work through governments. And notwithstanding the deeply engrained, unequal power relations in “paternalism across borders” (Barnett 2017), participatory approaches to aid require local partners. More recently, international relations scholars have also started to look at intermediation in complex arrangements of global governance more generally (thus no explicit attention to ALS). Focused on multilayered institutional arrangements, this research argues that IOs would govern through intermediaries more in soft policy issue areas, where governments accept to exercise less control (Abbott et al. 2014), such as human rights (Pegram 2015: 601). However, as shown earlier, in the traditionally most state-centric area of security, governance via intermediaries and brokers has also grown. Concepts of counterinsurgency and resilience (Pospisil and Kühn 2016) as well as the commercialization of security provision turned security governance in ALS more indirect and increased external actors’ dependence on third-party information and service providers, and local partners. Even multinational companies that are not specialized in the provision of security have become enrolled in global security governance in the context of the “business for peace” agenda (Haufler 2010; Berdal and Mousavizadeh 2010, critical Hönke 2014).

The results of this situation are mixed and often deeply contradictory. While for some observers, intermediaries are seen as enhancing the effectiveness of implementing global governance, it has also been shown that states can avoid accountability by outsourcing security governance in ALS to intermediaries (Jones and Newburn 1998; Avant and Nevers 2011). Additionally, working through intermediaries and local strongmen has been used by external actors as a means to stabilize fragile contexts, in particular in the aftermath of 9/11, when state fragility became perceived as potential threat to “homeland security” (Bachmann 2008; Fisher 2014; MacGinty 2012). Research on multinational companies (MNCs) has shown, for instance, how in order to create stable working conditions, MNCs use brokerage by working with private security companies and through clientelistic arrangements with local political elites in the context of corporate social responsibility (Reno 2004; Hönke 2013, forthcoming).

The best studied area of brokerage as a mode of transnational governance in ALS is the area of international development. Here, since the 1980s, governance through NGOs became a widespread donor strategy to circumvent states (Duffield 2001; Neumann and Sending 2010). Thus, IOs often work through intermediaries (NGOs, national agencies they create) to govern (Abbott et al. 2014). In

this context, the anthropology of international development (e.g. Olivier de Sardan 2005) focuses on social actors who “specialize in the acquisition, control, and redistribution of development ‘revenue’” (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 12)—often with a focus on entrepreneurial individuals seeking to exploit a situation in their favour, for instance when IO programmes meet rural peasant communities, with a broker intermediating between these two building on her “competencies, strategies, and ‘careers’” (Lewis and Mosse 2006: 13).

Relational approaches go beyond this perspective by focusing on transnational professionals that *do*—and thus mediate and translate—transnational governance. These are for example diplomats, security experts and professionals, development workers and peacekeepers. Mid- and low-level practitioners and their routine practices, so the argument, have a constitutive effect on global governance (e.g. Adler and Pouliot 2011; Leander 2005; Neumann 2012). This is indeed similar to the historical role that merchants or translators played in defining ideas of seemingly separate (pre)colonial worlds and the boundaries between them (Schaffer et al. 2009; Rothman 2012). In addition, contemporary private and military security companies broker a more military understanding of security, and, having been turned into legitimate service providers for states, translate market-driven views into the field of security expertise (Leander 2005). Innovative research on intermediation and expert politics could be fruitfully linked further to research on brokerage in global governance.

Recently, insights from science and technology studies have been used to reveal the translation done by algorithms, statistics, and audits in the transnational governance of ALS. Best (2014: 28) for instance has put forward a meso-level analysis of how the IMF governs in areas of limited statehood through such intermediate actors and actants, focusing on how standards, indicators and other mediating technologies negotiate, translate and produce governance knowledge into specific practices.

There is a tendency in this body of work to zoom in on what happens when global models get implemented in ALS. However, it is also important to stress brokerage in the *making* of the very policies to be implemented in ALS. Brokers relate abstract models and technologies, which IOs aim to diffuse, to the intentions and rationalities of the issuing organization, *and* to the situation into which it will be inserted. The resulting interactions between policymakers, consultants, aid workers, and addressees of projects, thus allow for creativity, transformation and the emergence of new practices (Rottenburg 2009). Translation thus goes into both directions and is transformative (Merry 2006; Lewis and Mosse 2006; Rottenburg 2009; Ostermeier 2016). Such a perspective thus captures the crucial role of the Global South in co-constituting global governance models and practices, and in transforming “the metropole” (Cooper and Stoler 1997; Hönke and Müller 2016).

Finally, it is necessary to pay attention to brokerage in global policy making towards ALS. As brokerage involves “the identification and localization of knowledge, the redistribution and

dissemination of knowledge, and the rescaling and *transformation* of that knowledge” (Meyer 2010: 210, own emphasis), knowledge brokers are crucial for understanding how ALS come to be known as such, and how they should be governed. The literature on knowledge brokers has shown how scientific and other expert knowledge is mediated and translated during policy formulation. A pertinent example is the career, despite all scientific critique and contestation, of the term “failed states” and related indices (Bilgin and Morton 2002; Bachmann and Hönke 2010). Others show how crises in ALS get translated so as to stabilize a coherent version of the truth on which derived security policies are build (e.g. Villumsen-Berling forthcoming), and how broader politics of expertise inform policies towards ALS (Büger 2015; Müller and Hochmüller 2017; *Third World Quarterly* 2014). Last but not least it has been shown how myths and urban legends crucially shape stereotypical perceptions of ALS, leading to negative interventions and outcomes (Bliesemann and Kühn 2015).

### **The quality of governance by brokerage and intermediation**

As modes of governance in ALS in general (see Risse, this volume), brokerage, intermediation and translation are widespread and diverse phenomena that defy any generic assessment regarding their outcomes. Recent literature suggests that this relationship is much more complex than assumed by past scholarship, in both positive and negative ways (e.g. Auyero 2001; Cammett and McLean 2011; Hilgers 2009; Hönke and Thomas 2012; Tsai 2007). There is a particular research gap in this regard concerning brokerage in external governance of ALS. Further, little research is available on how processes of translation affect the quality and effectiveness of governance. Against this background, it is mostly the literature on local brokers in ALS that is therefore at the center of the following discussion.

Before we turn to this, however, a short clarification of the quality of governance, and the difficulties with assessing it is due. We consider the inclusiveness of governance the most important dimension of quality. Two measures stand out, namely the claimed, and the actual scope of collective goods provision. Scope refers to both geographical and social reach: which geographical areas, and which social groups are addressed, and where and for whom is governance implemented (Hönke and Thomas 2012). A third dimension is crucial: the perception of governance; that is whether people evaluate governance outcomes as broad and fair, or narrow, unequal and exclusionary (ibid.; Cammett and MacLean 2011: 9). For the same absolute measures of scope, such evaluations can vary widely.

Turning to the quality of governance through brokerage, brokers in theory could be disinterested and impartial actors. An earlier generation of scholars worked on clientelism and addressed the role of brokers in patron-client relations as a neutral, if not positive and important functional equivalent to absent or inefficient state institutions, as well as an effective mechanism for

creating social cohesion. Such functionality is of course not always evident. Those who engage in brokerage are often interested in maintaining and accumulating power. Being an impartial facilitator rarely allows for that. Thus often brokers “provide selective access to goods and opportunities and place themselves or their supporters in positions from which they can divert resources and services in their favor” (Roninger 2004: 354). Stated otherwise, brokers may guard “monopolistic” access to goods and networks, as it is this monopoly on which their power and capacity to act as brokers ultimately depends. More recent scholarship, including on (neo)patrimonialism and corruption, is dominated by such a more negative perspective of intermediaries. In particular, after the 1990s, and following the “third wave of democratization,” debates shifted towards assessing the negative implications of persisting patron-client structures on democratization processes. As a consequence, personalised relations of rule that work via brokers and intermediaries have been mostly analyzed as a problem (for democracy, citizenship, the effectiveness of state institutions, the provision of collective goods etc.) This perspective, however, neglects previous insights regarding the functional equivalence of governance through intermediaries, and the accountability mechanisms operational in patrimonial relations.

A key debate in the more recent literature therefore is, under which conditions governance by local brokers is inclusive or exclusive. Two criteria emerge from the literature on brokers at the local level in ALS: *bias* and *cohesion*. Bias refers to “the extent to which the broker is relationally, socially, or informally closer to one party than the other, whereas cohesion describes the level of internal solidarity or cohesion among sets of actors linked by the broker” (Stovel and Shaw 2012: 142). If the group to which brokers provide access is cohesive and the (representative) broker has strong ties, such as ethnical or ideological, to this group, the broker is less likely to act in a purely self-interested way as would be the case if the broker is only weakly integrated in the group (Stovel and Shaw 2012: 144). In other words, brokers tend to divert a lesser amount of resources and goods to themselves, and serve the broader collective good if they are embedded in inclusive societal institutions of those they represent (also Hönke and Börzel 2013; Tsai 2007). The less cohesive the group, or rather the less inclusive societal institutions, the more brokerage tends to be favor the broker, for instance a bureaucrat, over the group. The gatekeeper, in this regard is situated on one side of the continuum of brokerage and the representative broker on the other. While gatekeepers tend to monopolize the resources that flow through their brokerage interactions, representative brokers in turn, provide more collective good-like benefits for their group. In other terms, if the broker is closer to an outsider, like an external actor or the state, who wants to get access to the broker’s group, the broker’s actions will favor these actors and their interests over those at the receiving end and vice-versa.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that brokerage, intermediation and translation are ubiquitous characteristics of our times—in and beyond ALS. In offering an integrative and synthesizing reading of the dispersed debates on brokerage as a mode of governance, we pointed towards the relevance as well as shortcomings of actor-centered approaches and their focus on power-maximizing actors, while stressing the frequently neglected importance of translation approaches, which, in turn, often underestimate the power relations involved in brokerage. We also brought the dominant, more micro-centred approaches, into a dialogue with literature that points towards the transnational dimension of brokerage in ALS. We thereby indicated that, far from being a phenomenon exclusively located in ALS, brokerage in ALS also shapes the very global policies directed at ALS, and the international organizations and institutions that produce them. The synthesizing reading, suggested by us, can also serve as a basis for empirically assessing the so far rather understudied transnational brokerage chains that link ALS to areas of more consolidated statehood and the global institutions shaping contemporary world politics, thereby contributing to an understanding how governance in ALS is co-produced globally through brokerage, and to what effect.

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